



## **TORNADOES -- KNOW THE FACTS AND PREPARE NOW**

A National Weather Survey team has confirmed that the Wednesday, July 9<sup>th</sup> Storm that moved across Loudoun County produced two tornadoes. Damages from Wednesday's storm that occurred in a path between Round Hill and Lincoln were caused by a tornado (F-1). The storm spawned an additional weak tornado (F-0) near Ashburn Farms.

A severe thunderstorm moved southeast out of Jefferson County, West Virginia. The first damage that was observed by this storm in Loudoun County was in the Village of



*Tree falls on house at 44 Main Street as F1 Tornado Passes through Round Hill, VA July 9, 2003*



Tree limbs wrapped around pole in downtown Round Hill, Virginia during July 9 F1 Tornado

Round Hill. The National Weather Service stated that at 2:20 PM, trees were snapped and the path of the damage was clearly convergent.

A large portion of a tree was snapped off and fell onto the roof of a house on Main Street. Additional damage to a home under construction was observed along with some siding peeled off another home.

During the first event, wind speeds reached 90 MPH and cut a 10-mile path across the County that averaged 100 yards in width. There were no injuries as a result of this storm that knocked down power lines and uprooted trees in its pathway.



***Kevin Johnson, Loudoun County's Office of Emergency Management, stands beside tree that was uprooted along Sands Road in Lincoln, Virginia during July 9, 2003, F1 Tornado.***

The damage path continued to the reached its maximum intensity just south of the Southeast of Round Hill where some of the village producing damage that is consistent with most extensive tree damage occurred near the a wind speed of approximately 90 MPH.

water treatment plant. Many trees in a 200 Intermittent damage to trees continued yard path were snapped or uprooted. The Na- further southeast with the damage path ending tional Weather Service stated that this is where just west of Route 15 south of Leesburg the Tornado reached its maximum intensity of a Around 2:40 PM an additional tornado Mid Range F1 Tornado on the Fujita Scale. was spawned near Ashburn Farms. The Na-

Damage then continued further to the tional Weather Service stated that a short path southeast in the Village of Lincoln. Many trees of approximately 1/2 mile was surveyed with a were uprooted or snapped in a swath that few trees uprooted and snapped in a conver- peaked around 200 yards. The tornado again gent path.



A home along Waxpool Road in Ashburn was damaged when a large section of a tree fell onto its roof. The National Weather Services stated that the second tornado is being classified as an F0 on the Fujita Scale with maximum winds speeds averaging 70 MPG. The average width of the second tornado was 75 yards.



F0 Tornado damages home at 42685 Waxpool Road in Ashburn

Tornadoes are one of nature's most violent storms. These recent storms remind us how quickly destructive tornadoes can move head and neck.

through Virginia. Regardless of where you live, all citizens need to learn what to do in case of a tornado. It pays to know how to keep yourself and your family safe.

When severe thunderstorms threaten, people should watch the sky and pay close attention to weather advisories. Environmental clues that may indicate an approaching tornado

The Loudoun County Department of Fire-Rescue Services' Office of Emergency Management encourages businesses and families to take time now to learn what to do in the event of a tornado.

include a dark, often greenish sky, large hail and a loud roar similar to a freight train. To alert the public of tornadoes, the National Weather Service issues tornado watches and warnings.

When preparing for tornadoes, the most important step is to find safe shelter. The general rule for tornado safety is to "go low and get low". In other words, you should go to the lowest level of the structure that you are in, away from windows; crouch in a low position, protecting your head. This same approach applies even if you are not in a building or cannot get to one. For instance, if you are in a mobile home, a car or outside, try to get to a sturdy building for shelter. If this is impossible, lie flat in a low area with your hands covering the back of your

- A tornado **WATCH** means that weather conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes. If a tornado WATCH is broadcast, stay tuned for further advisories and be prepared to take cover.
- If a tornado **WARNING** is issued, it means a tornado has actually been sighted. WARNINGS are issued for individual counties and include the tornado's location and its direction and speed. If you are in or near its path, seek shelter immediately. Do not attempt to look for the tornado. Many tornadoes in Virginia are obscured by rain and are not visible at all or are not visible until it is too late.

Knowing simple safety rules and taking immediate action can save your life. The following safety tips are offered by the Virginia Department of Emergency Services, the National Weather Services and the Loudoun County Department of Fire-Rescue Services, Office of Emergency Management:

- The best shelter from a tornado is a basement. If you do not have a basement, go to an inside room without windows on the lowest level of the house (a closet, bathroom or interior hall). Protect your body from flying debris with a heavy blanket or sleeping bag.
- Avoid windows. Opening windows to equalize pressure is ineffective in reducing damage during a tornado. Don't worry about the windows; worry about finding shelter and protecting yourself.
- Mobile homes are extremely unsafe during tornadoes. Seek shelter elsewhere.
- If you are caught in an open building like a shopping mall, gymnasium or civic center, get into the restroom, if possible. In larger buildings, restrooms are usually made of concrete block and will offer more protection.
- If there is no time to go anywhere else, seek shelter right where you are. Try to get up against something that will support or deflect falling debris. Protect your head by covering it with your arms.
- If you are outside when a tornado strikes, try to find shelter immediately in the nearest substantial building. If no buildings are close, take cover by lying down flat in a ditch or depression.
- If you are in your car, get out of your vehicle and try to find shelter. A bridge underpass, a culvert or ditch can all provide shelter if a substantial building is not nearby.
- Know the names of the counties, cities and towns that are near you, especially those to the west and south. You will be better able to track the tornado's direction if you are familiar with the geography of your area.

For further information regarding tornado preparedness or other preparedness activities contact Kevin Johnson with the Loudoun County Office of Emergency Management at 703-777-0333.



Tent at Franklin Park is destroyed during F1 Tornado.